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Essentials of Business Communication 12e



Chapter 11

Professionalism at Work: Business Etiquette, Teamwork, and Meetings

Icebreaker: Virtual Experience

1. The COVID-19 pandemic forced many of us to spend more of our time online.
2. Take a moment to reflect on some of your virtual experiences. Perhaps you took classes online or worked from home. Maybe you joined an online gaming community or took a virtual tour of a museum or art gallery.
3. In your opinion, what are the benefits of online communication?
4. What are the challenges that come with virtual interaction?

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter you should be able to:

- 11-1 Discuss how developing professionalism and business etiquette skills can boost your credibility and improve your competitive advantage.
- 11-2 Name techniques for successful face-to-face communication on the job.
- 11-3 List techniques for improving telephone skills to project a positive image.
- 11-4 Explain why teamwork is important in the digital era workplace and how you can contribute to excellent team performance.
- 11-5 Identify effective practices and technologies for planning and participating in face-to-face meetings and virtual meetings.

11-1

Developing Professionalism and Business Etiquette Skills On-Site and Online

11-1 Developing Professionalism and Business Etiquette Skills On-Site and Online (1 of 6)

- Your future employer will expect you to possess interpersonal skills in addition to your technical training.
- Besides complex communication skills, important twenty-first-century attributes include curiosity, creativity, adaptability, resilience, and critical thinking, as well as the ability to collaborate and thrive in diverse environments.
- **Business etiquette** is an attitude, a desire to show others consideration, courtesy, and respect.

11-1 Developing Professionalism and Business Etiquette Skills On-Site and Online (2 of 6)

Understanding Professionalism and the Cost of Incivility

- **Professionalism** refers to a combination of skills, including business etiquette or business protocol, soft skills, social intelligence, emotional intelligence, polish, and civility.
- **Desirable workplace behavior** refers to the interest or desire of businesses to have employees who get along and deliver positive results that enhance profits and boost the company's image.
- **Desk rage** refers to extreme outbursts or violent anger in the workplace.
- **Cyberbullying** is a form of bullying committed with digital devices aimed at scaring, angering, or shaming victims.

11-1 Developing Professionalism and Business Etiquette Skills On-Site and Online (3 of 6)

- **Civility** is generally understood to mean courtesy or politeness.
- **Polish** includes making positive first impressions, shaking hands, improving one's voice quality, listening, presenting well, dining skills, and more.
- **Dining etiquette** refers to the set of table manners and interpersonal behaviors that are expected of a person while eating, especially during business meals.

11-1 Developing Professionalism and Business Etiquette Skills On-Site and Online (4 of 6)

- **Social intelligence** requires us to interact well, be perceptive, show sensitivity toward others, and grasp a situation quickly and accurately.
- **Emotional intelligence** or emotional quotient is the ability to identify one's emotions as well as those of other people, empathize with others, and use emotional cues to guide thinking and behavior.
- **Hard skills** is a term for the technical knowledge in your field.
- **Soft skills** are commonly defined as interpersonal or social skills, professional skills, or, more broadly, emotional intelligence.

11-1 Developing Professionalism and Business Etiquette Skills On-Site and Online (5 of 6)

Relating Professional Behavior to Ethics

- **Ethics** is a set of moral principles or virtues.
- **Integrity** means following a code of moral values and being incorruptible.
- How we approach the seemingly trivial events of work life reflects our character and attitudes when we handle larger issues.

11-1 Developing Professionalism and Business Etiquette Skills On-Site and Online (6 of 6)

Gaining an Etiquette Edge in a Networked World

- An awareness of courtesy and etiquette can give you a competitive edge in the job market.
- Workers must manage and guard their reputation—at the office and online.
- Thoughtful blog posts, astute comments on LinkedIn and Facebook, as well as competent e-mails will enhance credibility and show professionalism.

Knowledge Check 1

True or False:

1. Business etiquette is an attitude, a desire to show others consideration, courtesy, and respect.
2. Desk rage refers to an employee's unwillingness to interact with their co-workers.
3. Dining etiquette refers to the set of table manners and interpersonal behaviors that are expected of a person while eating, especially during business meals.
4. Ethics is a set of workplace rules all employees must follow.

11-2

Communicating Face-to-Face on the Job

11-2 Communicating Face-to-Face on the Job

(1 of 10)

- Face-to-face conversation has many advantages.
 - Speakers can use their voice and body language to make a point, convey warmth, and build rapport.
 - Speakers are less likely to be misunderstood because they can read feedback and make needed adjustments.
 - In conflict resolution, speakers can reach a solution with fewer misunderstandings and cooperate to create greater levels of mutual benefit.

11-2 Communicating Face-to-Face on the Job

(2 of 10)

Using Your Voice as a Communication Tool

- Studies suggest a strong correlation between voice and perceived authority and trust.
 - Proper pronunciation involves saying words correctly and clearly with the accepted sounds and accented syllables.
 - The quality of your voice identifies your personality and your mood.
 - **Vocal fry** is a creaky, raspy sound at the end of drawn-out sentences.

11-2 Communicating Face-to-Face on the Job

(3 of 10)

- **Pitch** refers to sound vibration frequency, that is, the highness or lowness of a sound.
 - Voices are most engaging when they rise and fall in conversational tones.
 - Flat, monotone voices are considered boring and ineffectual.

11-2 Communicating Face-to-Face on the Job

(4 of 10)

- The **volume** of your voice is the loudness or the intensity of sound.
 - Just as you adjust the volume on your headphones or television set, you should adjust the volume of your speaking to the occasion and your listeners.
- **Rate** refers to the pace of your speech.
 - If you speak too slowly, listeners can become bored and their attention can wander.
 - If you speak too quickly, listeners may not be able to understand you.
 - Most people normally talk at about 125 words a minute.

11-2 Communicating Face-to-Face on the Job

(5 of 10)

- **Uptalk** is a habit of using a rising inflection at the end of a sentence resulting in a singsong pattern that makes statements sound like questions.
 - Uptalk makes speakers seem weak and tentative.
 - Their messages lack authority.

11-2 Communicating Face-to-Face on the Job

(6 of 10)

Making Workplace Conversation Matter

- Following are several business etiquette guidelines that promote positive workplace conversations, both in the office and at work-related social functions.
 - Use Correct Names and Titles.
 - Choose Appropriate Topics.
 - Avoid Negative Remarks.
 - Listen to Learn.
 - Give Sincere and Specific Praise.
 - Act Professionally in Social Situations.

11-2 Communicating Face-to-Face on the Job

(7 of 10)

Receiving Workplace Criticism Gracefully

- The following suggestions can help workers respond positively to criticism:
 - Listen without interrupting.
 - Determine the speaker's intent.
 - Acknowledge what you are hearing.
 - Paraphrase what was said.
 - Ask for more information if necessary.

11-2 Communicating Face-to-Face on the Job

(8 of 10)

- Agree—if the comments are accurate.
- Disagree respectfully and constructively—if you feel the comments are unfair.
- Look for a middle position.
- Learn from criticism.

11-2 Communicating Face-to-Face on the Job

(9 of 10)

Providing Constructive Criticism on the Job

- The following offers advice on how to provide constructive criticism on the job:
 - Mentally outline your conversation.
 - Generally, use face-to-face communication.
 - Focus on improvement.
 - Offer to help.
 - Be specific.

11-2 Communicating Face-to-Face on the Job

(10 of 10)

- Avoid broad generalizations.
- Discuss the behavior, not the person.
- Use the word “we” rather than “you.”
- Encourage two-way communication.
- Avoid anger, sarcasm, and a raised voice.
- Keep it private.

11-3

Following Telephone and Voice Mail Best Practices

11-3 Following Telephone and Voice Mail Best Practices (1 of 5)

Making Telephone Calls Professionally

- The following suggestions can make telephone calls more productive:
 - Plan a mini-agenda.
 - Use a three-point introduction.
 - Be brisk if you are rushed.
 - Be cheerful and accurate.
 - Be professional and courteous.
 - End the call politely.
 - Avoid telephone tag.
 - Leave complete voice mail messages.

11-3 Following Telephone and Voice Mail Best Practices (2 of 5)

Receiving Telephone Calls Professionally

- Use the following suggestions to receive telephone calls professionally:
 - Pick up and identify yourself immediately.
 - Be responsive and helpful.
 - Practice telephone confidentiality.
 - Take messages carefully.
 - Leave the line respectfully.
 - Explain what you are doing when transferring calls.

11-3 Following Telephone and Voice Mail Best Practices (3 of 5)

Using Smartphones in Business

- The vast majority of Americans (96 percent) own a cell phone today.
- Smartphone ownership stands at 81 percent, up from 35 percent just a decade ago.
- **Text neck** refers to posture problems resulting from the way we hang our heads while staring at screens.
- Because so many people depend on their mobile devices, it is important to understand proper use and etiquette.
- Researchers say that the rampant use of mobile electronic devices has increased workplace incivility.

11-3 Following Telephone and Voice Mail Best Practices (4 of 5)

Making the Best Use of Voice Mail

- Here are some etiquette tips for receiving voice mail:
 - Don't overuse voice mail.
 - Prepare a professional, concise, friendly greeting.
 - Test your message.
 - Respond to messages promptly.
 - Plan for vacations and other extended absences.

11-3 Following Telephone and Voice Mail Best Practices (5 of 5)

- When leaving a voice mail message, follow these tips:
 - Be prepared to leave a message.
 - Leave a concise, thorough message.
 - Speak slowly and clearly.
 - Be careful with confidential information.
 - Don't make assumptions.

Self-Assessment

1. Divide a piece of paper in half.
2. Label one column “Making Telephone Calls” and the other “Receiving Telephone Calls.”
3. Under the first heading, list some suggestions for making telephone calls more productive.
4. Under the second heading, list some suggestions for receiving telephone calls professionally.

11-4

Excelling in Professional Teams

11-4 Excelling in Professional Teams (1 of 7)

- An overwhelming majority of white-collar professionals (85 percent) need to partner with others to complete their work.
- In **matrixed teams**, employees' job tasks are spread out across multiple teams, and they don't always work with the same people or report to the same manager.
- 84 percent of U.S. employees are members of so-called matrixed teams.

11-4 Excelling in Professional Teams (2 of 7)

Understanding the Purpose of Teams

- Teams are formed for the following reasons:
 - Better decisions
 - Faster responses
 - Increased productivity
 - Greater buy-in
 - Less resistance to change
 - Improved employee morale
 - Reduced risks

11-4 Excelling in Professional Teams (3 of 7)

Working Remotely: The Rise of Virtual Teams

- A **hybrid model** refers to balancing remote work with an on-site presence.
- **Working-from-home economy** is a term coined by a Stanford scholar to refer to the current trend in today's workforce in which large numbers of employees work from home, full-time or part-time.
- The **Distributed Age** is a term coined by a Spotify executive to define the unique characteristics of today's workplace.

11-4 Excelling in Professional Teams (4 of 7)

- By 2025, according to one forecast, 22 percent of the American workforce will be full-time teleworkers, 87 percent more than before the pandemic; up to 70 percent of the workforce will work remotely at least five days a month.
- Given these trends, you can expect to collaborate with coworkers located anywhere, whether in the same town or in other cities and even in other countries.
- **Virtual teams** are groups of people who, aided by information technology, accomplish shared tasks largely without face-to-face contact across geographic boundaries, sometimes on different continents and across time zones.

11-4 Excelling in Professional Teams (5 of 7)

Recognizing Positive and Negative Team Behavior

- The most effective groups have members who are willing to establish rules and abide by them.
- Effective team members are able to analyze tasks and define problems so that they can work toward solutions.
- Helpful team members strive to resolve differences and encourage a warm, supportive climate by praising and agreeing with others.
- When agreement is near, they move the group toward its goal by summarizing points of understanding.

11-4 Excelling in Professional Teams (6 of 7)

- Negative behavior emerges when some constantly put down the ideas and suggestions of others.
- They may waste the group's time with unnecessary recounting of personal achievements or irrelevant topics.
- Also disturbing are team members who withdraw and refuse to be drawn out.

11-4 Excelling in Professional Teams (7 of 7)

Defining Successful Teams

- Effective teams share some or all of the following characteristics:
 - Stay small and embrace diversity
 - Agree on a purpose
 - Establish procedures
 - Confront conflict
 - Communicate effectively
 - Collaborate rather than compete
 - Accept ethical responsibilities
 - Share leadership

Knowledge Check 2

Multiple Choice:

1. Teams are formed for all the following reasons EXCEPT:
 - A. Better decisions
 - B. Faster responses
 - C. Increased productivity
 - D. Increased risks
2. Effective teams share all of the following characteristics EXCEPT:
 - A. Agree on a purpose
 - B. Establish procedures
 - C. Ignore conflict
 - D. Communicate effectively

11-5

Making the Most of Face-to-Face and Virtual Meetings

11-5 Making the Most of Face-to-Face and Virtual Meetings (1 of 13)

- One conservative estimate suggests that workers on average spend more than a fifth of their work time in meetings and consider more than half of that time as wasted.
- Business meetings consist of three or more people who assemble to pool information, solicit feedback, clarify policy, seek consensus, and solve problems.
- In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings have changed, and many workers have come to rely on video conferencing.
- Instead of treating meetings as thieves of your valuable time, try to see them as golden opportunities to demonstrate your leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills.

11-5 Making the Most of Face-to-Face and Virtual Meetings (2 of 13)

Preparing for the Meeting

- Determining the Purpose of the Meeting.
 - No meeting should be called unless it is important, can't wait, and requires an exchange of ideas.
 - If people are merely being informed, it's best to send an e-mail, text message, or memo.
 - To decide whether the purpose of the meeting is valid, consult the key people who will be attending.

11-5 Making the Most of Face-to-Face and Virtual Meetings (3 of 13)

- Deciding How and Where to Meet
 - If you decide to meet in person, reserve a conference room.
 - If you decide to meet virtually, select the appropriate media and make any necessary arrangements for your voice/audio conference or videoconference.
 - **Zoom fatigue** is the feeling of exhaustion felt after hours on Zoom and other video calls.

11-5 Making the Most of Face-to-Face and Virtual Meetings (4 of 13)

- Selecting Meeting Participants
 - If the meeting purpose is motivational, such as an awards ceremony, then the number of participants is potentially unlimited.
 - For effective decision making, experts recommend limiting the session to fewer than eight participants.

11-5 Making the Most of Face-to-Face and Virtual Meetings (5 of 13)

- Using Digital Calendars to Schedule Meetings
 - Finding a time when everyone can meet is often difficult.
 - Online calendars and mobile apps enable users to make appointments, schedule meetings, and keep track of daily activities.
 - Popular programs and mobile apps are Google Calendar, Apple Calendar, and Outlook Calendar.

11-5 Making the Most of Face-to-Face and Virtual Meetings (6 of 13)

- Distributing an Agenda and Other Information
 - At least two days before a meeting, distribute an agenda of topics to be discussed.
 - A good agenda covers the following information:
 - Date and place of meeting
 - Start time and end time
 - Brief description of each topic, in order of priority, including the names of individuals who are responsible for performing some action
 - Proposed allotment of time for each topic
 - Any premeeting preparation expected of participants

11-5 Making the Most of Face-to-Face and Virtual Meetings (7 of 13)

Managing the Meeting

- Getting Started and Establishing Ground Rules
 - Open the meeting with a three- to five-minute introduction that includes the following:
 - Goal and length of the meeting
 - Background of topics or problems
 - Possible solutions and constraints
 - Tentative agenda
 - Ground rules to be followed

11-5 Making the Most of Face-to-Face and Virtual Meetings (8 of 13)

- Moving the Meeting Along
 - An effective leader lets others talk and tries to involve all participants.
 - To avoid allowing digressions to sidetrack the group, try generating a parking lot list, a list of important but divergent issues that should be discussed later.
 - Adhere to the agenda and the schedule.
 - When the group seems to have reached a consensus, summarize the group's position and see whether everyone agrees.

11-5 Making the Most of Face-to-Face and Virtual Meetings (9 of 13)

- Handling Conflict in Meetings
 - In meetings, conflict typically develops when people feel unheard or misunderstood.
 - If two people clash, the best approach is to encourage each to make a complete case while group members give their full attention.
 - Let each one question the other.
 - Then, the leader should summarize what was said, and the participants should offer comments.
 - The group may modify a recommendation or suggest alternatives before reaching consensus on a direction to follow.

11-5 Making the Most of Face-to-Face and Virtual Meetings (10 of 13)

Concluding the Meeting and Following Up

- End the meeting at the agreed time or sooner.
- The leader should summarize all decisions, assigned tasks, and deadlines.
- All participants should understand what was accomplished.
- The leader should conclude by asking the group to set a time for the next meeting.
- Finally, the leader should thank participants for attending.
- If minutes were taken, they should be distributed within a couple of days of the meeting.

11-5 Making the Most of Face-to-Face and Virtual Meetings (11 of 13)

Interacting in Zoom, Teams, and Other Virtual Meetings

- **Virtual meetings** are real-time gatherings of dispersed participants who connect with communication technology.
- These meetings have many purposes, including training employees, making sales presentations, coordinating team activities, and talking to customers.
- Although the same good meeting management techniques discussed for face-to-face meetings apply, additional skills and practices are important in virtual meetings.

11-5 Making the Most of Face-to-Face and Virtual Meetings (12 of 13)

- The following best practices for conducting virtual meetings:
 - Select the most appropriate technology.
 - Ensure that all participants are able to use the technology.
 - Encourage participants to log in 15 minutes early.
 - Be aware of different time zones.
 - Rotate your meeting time to be fair to all dispersed group members.
 - Decide what language to use.

11-5 Making the Most of Face-to-Face and Virtual Meetings (13 of 13)

- Explain how questions may be asked and answered.
- Ensure that it is clear who is speaking in audioconferences.
- Remind the group to silence all electronic alerts and alarms.
- Don't multitask.
- Anticipate the limitations of virtual technology.
- Manage turn-taking.
- Humanize virtual meetings.